Paul emphasizes the superiority of love. Love is to escape the black hole of one’s own clinging egotism and to live for someone else.

Peter and Paul are enduring archetypes in the life of the Church. Peter stands for office, structure, hierarchy, and headship. Paul stands for mission, the engagement of the culture, and proclamation.

The two together have propelled the Church through the centuries and around the world.

FOR REFLECTION AND REVIEW

What did Jesus mean by calling Peter and his companions to become “fishers of men”? How has God called you to be a fisher of men?

Have you ever experience the temptation to deny or minimize Christ? To ignore him? If so, what brought about the situation? How does Christ extend his forgiveness to us?

What have you learned—or can you learn—from Peter and Paul that will help you in your relationship with Christ?

What does it mean to live “in Christ”? What are ways in which we can grow in God’s divine life and experience it more deeply and fully?
I. The Indispensable Men

- The two players without whom the Christian movement never would have survived are Peter and Paul. Why these two? Peter was the unwavering witness to the Resurrection and the Rock, and Paul was the first great Christian theologian.

II. Peter

- Born Simon, son of John, from a little fishing village. He wasn’t well educated, but he wasn’t poor either. He is rash, honest, and flawed, and leaves everything to become one of Jesus’ most intimate followers.
- Peter was with Jesus at the major events of his life.
  - From the Transfiguration, we learn that you come to know Christ by falling in love with Him.
  - From the stormy night on the Sea of Galilee, we learn that as long as we keep our eyes fixed on Christ, we can walk on the stormy waters of history. When we look away, that’s when we sink.
  - Finally, from Peter’s encounter with Jesus after the Resurrection, we learn that our love for Jesus must always bring about a love for one another.

III. Peter’s Confession

- Peter knew Jesus was the one who would gather the tribes, cleanse the temple, and rule as Lord of Israel. Peter knew that Jesus was the Son of God. This knowledge was a special charism of the Holy Spirit.
- Peter was the definitive witness to the Risen Jesus, and he became a tower of strength and resolve, his proclamation centering on the Resurrection. Peter’s successors have always had the fundamental task of witnessing of Jesus’ Resurrection.

IV. Paul

- Born Saul, he studied the Scriptures and became zealous for the traditions of his ancestors.
- The emerging Christianity was what bothered him most, and he set out with a fanatic passion to persecute the early Christians. He is portrayed in the Acts of the Apostles as looking at the martyrdom of Stephen with approval.

V. Conversion & Mission

- On the Road to Damascus to persecute the Christians, Jesus appears to Saul, and conversion follows.
- Saul becomes Paul. His mission was to declare to everybody that they had a new King. Through the power of the Resurrection, Jesus is revealed as the Light to the Nations. Paul felt commissioned by Christ to be the bearer of that message to the world.
- The Gospel that Paul preached was submission to the Lordship of a new King: Christ, Crucified and Risen. We see in Paul’s preaching that authentic Christian proclamation should be subversive and explosive.

VI. Resurrection

- Paul’s message of Resurrection is that the Crucified Jesus of Nazareth arose bodily from the realm of the dead and exists now in a transfigured physicality.

VII. Participation in Christ

- Paul’s principle theme is participation in Christ. Christ is a power, and the idea is, by a kind of mystical participation, to enter into that power.